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ABSTRACT

A survey of the school library situation in Nova Scotia found an uneven distribution of such library services. Results of the study support (1) the establishment of library service on a district or regional basis with a coordinator of library services and a library resource center as a minimum for each district; (2) a stated policy, guidelines, and professional and financial assistance for regional library programs from the provincial Department of Education; (3) the need for school libraries to contain audiovisual as well as print materials and, in particular, for libraries to serve the needs of the various school populations including the mentally handicapped, the learning disabled, racial and ethnic minorities, women, the gifted, and the visually and hearing handicapped; and (4) the importance of libraries being made easily accessible to the physically disabled. It is recommended that school library services remain separate from the public library system since they serve distinct purposes, though close cooperation should be established, especially in rural areas. This report includes a selected five-page bibliography of related materials, a summary of meetings, and a work schedule. (Author/LMM)

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Minister's Task Force on School Libraries

Report

IR050296

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March 1981

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BACKGROUND

In mid-June, 1979, the Honourable Terence R.B. Donahoe, Minister of Education, appointed a Task Force to define the role of the school library in the education system of Nova Scotia, and to formulate provincial guidelines for the development and expansion of library service in the schools. This action was taken in response to a presentation made to the Minister by the executive of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, on behalf of the Nova Scotia School Library Association.

MEMBERS OF THE MINISTER'S TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Appointed June, 1979:	Arthur Black, Library Consultant, School Libraries, City of Sydney
	Catharine Gardiner, Assistant Inspector of Schools, County of Cape Breton & Northside-Victoria Amalgamated Area
	Elaine Rillie, Librarian, L.E. Shaw Elementary School, Avonport, Kings County, and Past-President, N.S.S.L.A.
	Tom Sheppard, Teacher, North Queens Elementary School, Caledonia, Queens County
	Lewis Smith, Dartmouth, representing the Nova Scotia School Boards Association
	Chairman: Shirley Coulter, Coordinator, School Libraries, Provincial Library
Appointed December, 1979:	Faye Haley, Librarian, Digby Regional High School, and member of executive of N.S.S.L.A.
Appointed March, 1980:	Beverly True, Chief Librarian, Cumberland Regional Library, Amherst

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS AND WORK SCHEDULE

Between June 1979 and June 1980, this Task Force met formally six times at the Provincial Library.

June 27: Organizational session; discussed terms of reference and tentative plan of action for months ahead; chairman provided copies of pertinent documents and background reading for members to study during the summer.

September 28: First work session; drew up suggested table of contents for final report; in-depth discussion of work to be done; division of labour.

October-December: During this period, each Task Force member organized meetings, work sessions, etc. in his/her own area, in order to collect input from a cross-section of the community; these activities resulted in detailed briefs, formal letters, informal notes, telephone communications and face-to-face discussions. This interest by school boards, administrators, teachers, librarians, parents and students was very encouraging.

January 7-15: To obtain input from the Halifax County area (including the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth) Lewis Smith organized and chaired four public meetings during this period. (A summary of the minutes from these sessions is included in the support materials which follow this report).

January 18-19: At this third meeting of the Task Force, each member reported on the sessions held in his/her area, and presented copies of briefs, etc. for discussion by the group. Task Force joined by the professional staff of the Provincial Library and Media Services to view video-tape "Ding-a-ling Library", which shows a school district resource centre in action.

February-March: Individual Task Force members prepared papers on topics allotted to them, e.g. the general proposal on school library development in Nova Scotia; district organization; cooperation with other libraries; special services. These papers were to make up the bulk of the final report.

March 28-29:	The fourth meeting of the Task Force was an intensive work session where the above papers were read, discussed, edited and rewritten.
April-May:	During this period, Chairman began to pull together accumulated material to be organized for final report. Outlines for district organization in their particular areas were prepared by several Task Force members. (These outlines are included in the support material which follows this report.)
May 30-31:	Another intensive work session for revising and rewriting.
June 20-21:	This session called to decide on format of final report, what support material to be included, etc. All material turned over to Chairman, who would write the report.
January 16, 1981:	This final session of Task Force cancelled at last minute as Chairman fell on ice and broke ankle.

INTRODUCTION

> "How can anyone be sure that the education we are providing today will help students to be fulfilled adults in the Nova Scotia of the late eighties and nineties?
>
> We can't be sure but we can expect an ideal school library to improve the student's chances for becoming a capable, confident young adult able to cope with the future.
>
> Yes, this is asking a lot of the school library. No apology. Here is the storehouse of some of our best thinking coupled with the freedom to bring in new concepts and realities. Libraries can provide opportunities for personal growth which no other school program can duplicate..."
>
> - Ronald H. Loucks, Clayton Park School Support Association, Clayton Park Junior High School, January, 1980.

Modern approaches to learning, such as individualized instruction, independent study, integrated curriculum, bilingual education, presuppose an infinite variety of resources to support them -- resources which are accessible to students and teachers, and which are administered by knowledgeable personnel who can help make them relevant and exciting.

These resources should include print and non-print materials of consistent excellence which stimulate the growth of literary appreciation, factual knowledge and esthetic values. A background of information should be provided which represents many religious, ethnic and cultural groups, and the opposing sides of controversial issues, so that critical thinking and intelligent judgements might be achieved.

Personnel selecting library resources must take into account the varied capabilities of those who will be using them. Students with learning handicaps should have access to materials which interest and satisfy, without discouraging and frustrating them, while the more gifted should find resources which challenge and stretch their minds.

In the report which follows, we do not propose that every school in Nova Scotia must have a fully-equipped library, nor do we propose that every school library must have a fully-qualified, full-time librarian in charge. We are too well aware of the economic situation in many of our communities, so have made a sincere effort to be practical in our proposals and recommendations.

However, we are convinced that every student and teacher in Nova Scotia is entitled to good school library service, including access to a wide range of resource materials and the assistance and guidance of knowledgeable resource personnel.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

Although the Task Force has been concerned with the school library picture throughout the province, and is recommending action which will benefit school libraries in general, one of its chief concerns has been for individual schools and school systems in the smaller urban and rural areas.

While it is agreed that much still needs to be done for the school libraries in the Halifax-Dartmouth area, it is obvious that these school systems have out-distanced most of the boards in the province in the provision of library personnel, facilities and collections.

The expertise and experience shown in the various briefs presented by these areas to this Task Force have been of invaluable assistance to the members in the preparation of this report.

However, it was agreed that before an overall plan for future development on a province-wide basis could be formulated, some effort had to be made to narrow the gap between school library systems, such as those just mentioned, and the less-developed and non-existent ones in other areas of the province.

For this reason, the Task Force is stressing district development of school library services and closer cooperation with regional public library systems as the best solution to the present problem.

Because it seemed obvious that future funding for school libraries would be directly related to the recommendations of the Commission on Public Education Finance, it was decided to keep our recommendations related to funding in fairly general terms, leaving the door open for more specific planning once the above Commission had completed its work.

We are particularly concerned, however, that if library funding continues to be based on school enrolment, an adequate minimum be set so that smaller schools will not be penalized for their size and will be able to develop collections and services to fill the needs of their students and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A COMPILATION

These recommendations are listed in the order in which they appear within the body of this report

1) That the library not be considered just another "subject" department in the school, in competition for funding and attention, but that it be given special consideration as a basic support service, and be accorded a special commitment by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the local school boards.

2) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education issue an authoritative statement setting forth its policy on school libraries,

That this statement clearly outline not only the responsibilities of the Department in this regard, but also the duties and responsibilities of school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers and school library personnel, and

That such a statement be included in the next revision of the Education Act.

3) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education initiate a plan to develop and expand school library services throughout the province and set minimum standards for such services.

4) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education establish a permanent School Library Committee to put into action such a plan, to implement standards, and to act as an ongoing working group within the Department to deal with matters relating to school libraries,
and

That this Committee be represented on other Department of Education committees, task force groups, survey teams, etc., especially those related to curriculum development and program planning and evaluation.

5) That the School Library Committee study the various documents mentioned [in the section of the report GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN NOVA SCOTIA: A PROPOSAL] with a view to developing and publishing such GUIDELINES.

6) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education initiate a 3-5 year plan for the development of school library service at the district level, throughout the province.

7) That larger school boards and/or smaller boards acting in concert, be encouraged to employ qualified library supervisors.

8) That, to assist school boards to hire such qualified personnel, the Department of Education consider providing some initial financial assistance.

9) That cooperation between school and public libraries become a stated objective of the Nova Scotia Department of Education,

That the Department of Education actively promote both formal and informal cooperation between school libraries and other types of libraries and related institutions,
and

That ways and means be planned by the Department of Education to carry out these recommendations.

10) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education conduct an evaluation of the school/public library services provided by the Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre, with a view to comparing the findings to evaluations of similar combined school/public libraries in other areas of Canada.

11) That funding for school library materials be adequate to cover the acquisition of learning materials related to special groups (ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual, mentally handicapped, etc.) and to the varied learning capabilities of all students.

12) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education consider the provision of special funds to school districts wishing to develop library collections, at the district level, of these specialized materials.

13) That the School Planning Division of the Department of Education insure that all new school library facilities are planned with the needs of the handicapped student and teacher in mind,
and

That the School Planning Division study existing school library facilities with a view to recommending renovations necessary to make these libraries more accessible to handicapped users.

14) That adequate funds be made available, perhaps over a 3-5 year period, so that schools which have not received capital grants for library materials might establish and/or upgrade their library collections.

15) That the per pupil annual grant for the purchase of library materials be increased to a realistic amount.

16) That an adequate minimum annual grant for library materials be set so that schools with lower populations will not be penalized, and will be able to develop collections and services to fill the needs of their students and teachers.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF NOVA SCOTIA

> "Public schools in Nova Scotia should provide all students with a series of learning experiences that will help them to contribute to society and to live lives that are personally rewarding and fulfilling ... To develop knowledge and understanding of history, particularly of the history of Canada ... To develop the habits and methods of critical thinking and to foster the natural desire to learn and understand ... to have their curiosity encouraged ... to acquire habits, attitudes and intellectual skills that will be helpful in employment ... Provision should be made for ... learning materials suited to the needs, interests and special abilities of each pupil insofar as it is possible to provide such materials ...".
>
> - Public School Programs, 1980/82, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is to be commended for the philosophy of education espoused in its recent publication, from which the above excerpts were taken.

The Minister's Task Force on School Libraries does not hesitate to support such a philosophy and the guidelines related to specific programs and courses. In fact, it is the conviction of this Task Force that one of the logical vehicles for implementing the above aims and objectives is good school library service which will support the teaching and learning activities, and supplement curriculum resources related to particular programs. Although little specific mention of the necessity for adequate library services has been made in Public School Programs 1980/82, the Task Force presumes that support of its conviction would be forthcoming from all personnel involved in compiling and utilizing this publication.

It is obvious that the expense of providing all desirable resource materials for every classroom would be astronomical. Where possible, a central agency within the school can house and make available a wide range of such materials, avoid unnecessary duplication, and develop a more complete and equitable method of exploiting all resources within and without the school.

The role of the school library as such an integrating, interdisciplinary force is a vital one. If this role is recognized, the library then assumes its proper place as a necessary support service, equal to the administration, secretarial and maintenance departments of the school, serving staff and students and supporting the total program of the school.

Therefore, it is recommended that the library not be considered just another "subject" department in the school, in competition for funding and attention, but that it be given special consideration as a basic support service, and be accorded a special commitment by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the local school boards.

THE ROLE OF THE NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

> "Enlightened leadership at the provincial level is essential to provide a stabilizing force throughout the school systems of the province. All these bodies must be helped to understand the importance of school library service."
>
> - "The role of the school library", by Philomena Hauck. Education Canada, Winter 1979.

While the ultimate responsibility for initiating, developing, and maintaining a school library program undoubtedly rests with each school board, leadership must come from the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Over the past twenty years, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Department of Education have taken a number of steps to promote school libraries and to provide some tangible support.

The appointment in October, 1960, of a provincial Supervisor (now Coordinator) of School Libraries, provided a consultant service for boards and individual schools concerned with developing library services. However, beyond some weeding out of unsuitable and dated material, some wiser spending of available funds, and a rise in morale, there was no immediate or vast improvement in the overall school library picture.

With the approval, in 1970, of Regulations which made both operational and capital costs for school libraries eligible for grants under the Foundation Program [Regulation 21(d)(iii) and Regulation 23(c)(i)] and in 1972, when Regulation 77A provided cost-sharing for salaries of school librarians, the picture began to change.

School boards were now given an incentive to provide library space, especially in new schools, purchase more adequate collections, and hire qualified staff.

Over the next few years, there was a surge in school library programs throughout the province.

In 1976, budgetary restraints and reduction of the cost-shared grants for school library materials struck a blow at the still delicate school library growth.

Since then, many boards and individual schools have continued to do the best they can to initiate and build library services, and there have been some exciting developments here and there. However, a feeling of stagnation and deterioration is beginning to set in in many areas. Lately, morale has been very low. Forced to resort to fudge sales, flea markets, and second-hand book drives to supplement meagre library allowances, librarians, teachers, administrators and boards have found it difficult to maintain a positive outlook about their own library situation and the provincial school library picture as a whole.

The Task Force on School Libraries, reinforced by input from all corners, has been forced to conclude that for too long, school libraries have been very low on the Department of Education's list of priorities.

The appointment of this Task Force has done much to raise morale and give hope to those who are concerned with the need for school libraries. It is vital that the Department of Education follow through on what it has begun and make a genuine commitment to the value of school libraries in the education system of Nova Scotia.

Therefore, it is recommended

1) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education issue an authoritative statement setting forth its policy on school libraries,

   That this statement clearly outline not only the responsibilities of the Department in this regard, but also the duties and responsibilities of school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers and school library personnel, and

   That such a statement be included in the next revision of the Education Act.

   (For an example of such a statement, see Sources and Resources, published by the Ministry of Education, British Columbia, 1978. The pertinent pages are included in the support material which follows this report)

2) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education initiate a plan to develop and expand school library services throughout the province, and set minimum standards for such services.

3) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education establish a permanent School Library Committee to put into action such a plan, to implement standards, and to act as an ongoing working group within the Department to deal with matters relating to school libraries,

and

That this Committee be represented on other Department of Education committees, task force groups, survey teams, etc., especially those related to curriculum development and program planning and evaluation.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN NOVA SCOTIA: A PROPOSAL

> If there is agreement about the desirability and importance of school libraries, and a willingness on the part of the Department of Education and local school boards to make such a commitment, how do we get from where we are now to where we would like to be?

Educators, in one way or another, at one level of government or another, have been dealing with this question for some time. Some suggested solutions to the problem have been too vague ("Just give us more."), others too poignant ("We'll take anything!"). Still others, conscientiously researched and laboriously written, have been too detailed and too utopian, or so it would seem.

For the most part, the arguments and details we wish to present have been considered before, in an extensive body of literature. We do not wish to repeat all this material, but to draw attention to several of the more relevant documents.

The first of these is Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools, produced by the Canadian School Library Association. Its Appendix A: Quantitative Standards for School Libraries, pp.52-61, is valuable because it provides actual figures: how many librarians needed to establish and maintain a library, etc. The actual figures given are subject to disagreement. To some, they would be inadequate, as this document was published in 1967. Since then, the dollar has been seriously eroded by inflation. However, as we in Nova Scotia have never received anywhere near the amounts recommended, some may think the figures utopian and not to be considered. Nevertheless, they do set a standard -- something to aim for. The main body of this document, and its successor, Resource Services for Canadian Schools, 1977, are well worth reading for their philosophy and ideas. Unfortunately, the latter publication lacks quantitative standards.

A Brief which was presented to this Task Force gives us a similar quantitative and well-organized approach to the subject of school libraries. The Halifax Board of School Commissioners: Library Department. Presentation to the Task Force on School Libraries; January 1980, is up-to-date

and based on the experiences and point-of-view of the administrators, teachers and library personnel in the Halifax school system. It consists of recommendations to the Task Force, supported by ample background material and arguments, and its appendices contain much valuable information on that system.

The Task Force suggests that the 1967 Standards and the 1980 Halifax Presentation are good starting points for anyone wishing a blueprint for a province-wide school library system. These two documents are not in agreement on every point, and there is certainly room for further detail, further suggestions and further adaptation to particular situations. We doubt, however, if any successful approach would stray very far from the essentially similar blueprint found in these presentations.

It is not necessary to dwell on the present situation, which has been well-explored and described in the recent survey produced by the Nova Scotia School Library Association, as well as in the numerous presentations made to this Task Force. One is struck not only with the general inadequacy of resources, facilities and services, but with their uneven distribution. Very briefly, some schools have good, even very good, library programs. Others have nothing, or next to nothing.

This situation is not merely a matter of affluent versus poor communities, or interested versus uninterested people. Often it is a matter of pure chance whether a school has library services, or not. We have heard of one school, for instance, which received a grant because it happened to lose its old library collection in a fire. One is tempted to add arson to one's list of creative library functions!

Seriously, it seems to make little sense for one school to have nothing while a school just down the street has an excellent library program.

A new school is likely to have an adequate, or better, library program because its development follows a kind of inescapable logic. It is probably unthinkable to build a new school without a library room. If a library is to be provided, it might as well be of adequate size. Since this costs so much in construction expenses, it is absurd not to provide suitable furniture and equipment, and an adequate budget for books and non-print materials. If this is done, the next logical step is to hire a librarian and provide the necessary support staff to organize and maintain the library program.

What we are asking is that the same logic be applied to all schools in the province. This is not just a matter of fairness. There is also a strong conviction that if we do not move forward, we are most certainly doomed to move backward.

It is not necessary to dwell here on the effects of inflation, declining enrolments, cutbacks in budget and staff, which have been mentioned again and again in our meetings with school administrators, teachers, and members of the general public. It is difficult to decide which is more distressing: the school which has finally made a start on its library program and has been forced to cut back, or the school whose resources have never been more than negligible and which seems doomed to continue this way.

One informal study was conducted by a concerned parent, curious as to how much his family of four spent on all media (television, movies, books, educational toys, newspapers, magazines). He figured that it amounted to at least $500 per year. Then he discovered that the elementary school his two children attended spent $200-$300 per year for all media for all pupils.

Apart from the fact that many children get little such stimulation in the home, is it really acceptable that an educational institution serving several hundred pupils should spend less than that spent by a two-child family?

We are drawn back to our need for standards at which we can aim in order to bring adequate library service to all students in the province, and a plan for achieving such standards.

The 1967 Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools inevitably echoes the realities of a more affluent part of Canada; the 1980 Halifax Presentation those of the most affluent community in Nova Scotia.

It would be unrealistic to demand these standards tomorrow. It would be equally unrealistic to reject the wisdom and experience on which these documents are based.

Therefore, it is recommended that the School Library Committee of the Department of Education study the various documents mentioned in the foregoing, with a view to developing and publishing GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN NOVA SCOTIA.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL: A PROPOSAL

As we have stated in the INTRODUCTION to this report, it does not seem practical to expect that every Nova Scotia school, whatever its size, will have a fully-equipped library facility, with a collection adequate to the needs of its students and teachers, and a fully-qualified full-time librarian to administer it.

However, if we do believe that every student and teacher in Nova Scotia is entitled to good school library service, how do we suggest that this might be provided?

The survey conducted by the Nova Scotia School Library Association, the investigations by members of this Task Force, plus general knowledge of the school library situation throughout the province, support the conviction that school library services in Nova Scotia are extremely inconsistent and unequal. The varying use of library personnel results, at times, in inefficiency. The extreme differences in budgets and collections mean that some students are being badly cheated because of the meagre resources available to them. There is a miscellany of problems, including geographical ones.

Areas which have had the benefit of a district Supervisor of School Libraries now have fairly good levels of service. Halifax, particularly, has proven that years of commitment to planning and coordination can provide excellent service to all schools within a system. Without supervision, service cannot help but be uneven and inconsistent. Unreliable funding and inefficient use of personnel cannot help but result in inequality.

It is our contention that if schools in the smaller urban and rural areas are to achieve an acceptable level of library service, organization on a district basis, with adequate qualified supervisory and support staff, including personnel in individual school libraries, and funds to provide resources and carry out programs, is the answer.

A provincial plan of development, endorsed and implemented at the local level, is a vital step to be taken. Cooperation among smaller boards, with some sharing of personnel and resources, will be necessary. Some thought might be given to such cooperation between school

and regional library boards in areas where this is feasible.

Financial encouragement from the Department of Education may be needed to enable these boards to adopt policies of cooperation and coordination, and to hire qualified supervisory personnel to get district programs underway.

A DISTRICT SERVICE should be made up of two facets -- a library SUPERVISOR, and a DISTRICT RESOURCE CENTRE, with whatever support staff and materials are necessary.

The main purpose of the district service is the integration of resources, human and material, and the better use of same.

Just as in an individual school the librarian draws together all resource materials for better organization and distribution, and therefore better use by students and staff, so within the district school library service, the supervisor coordinates materials and services, and makes them available to a family of schools.

As well as providing professional expertise to assist individual schools in developing their own library programs, the district supervisor administers the school library budget for the area, conducts in-service training sessions with library personnel and teachers, and develops such services as centralized ordering and processing of all library materials purchased within the district.

The district resource centre will house those materials which are often too expensive or specialized to be purchased by an individual school library, and make them available when a particular need arises. The resource centre collection may include audio-visual equipment and software, picture collections, special reference books, a professional collection (in the school library and/or education field) and work areas where teachers and school library personnel may create original learning and teaching materials.

It should be admitted at the outset that neither the district supervisor nor the district resource centre will be inexpensive items. The hiring of a district supervisor should be just a beginning, and should imply a willingness on the part of the authorities involved to extend school

library services to all schools within a given area. The resource centre needs not only the materials in its collection, but support staff with the organizational skills to maintain these materials and a workable distribution system.

While the concept of school library service at the district level is a fairly simple one, and general guidelines could be laid down to be followed throughout the province, it does not seem feasible, or necessary, that every school library district should be organized and developed in exactly the same way.

In the larger urban areas, some of the smaller urban areas, large amalgamated systems, and compact rural systems, a district school library service totally controlled by the school board/boards may be the best plan.

Examples of this method in action may be seen in Halifax, Dartmouth, Sydney, and Halifax County, where school boards have employed a Supervisor of School Libraries.

Barrington Municipal School Board employs a qualified librarian who acts as librarian for the Junior-Senior High School, and also supervises and coordinates library services for all schools in that Municipality and in Clark's Harbour.

[In Westville, the librarian hired originally for the high school library has been serving as librarian for the Westville Schools for a number of years.] *

The Northside-Victoria Amalgamated Area employs a "Board Librarian" who makes a valiant effort to coordinate library services in this large geographical area, while acting as full-time librarian in the largest junior high school in the system.

For the primarily rural areas of the province, a plan involving closer cooperation with the regional public library systems may be worth consideration. Such plan might even include some formal liaison, such as sharing of supervisory personnel.

* not included in original Report

Individual members of this Task Force have prepared outlines of district organization which might be possible in their particular areas of the province. These outlines, and other pertinent documents, will be found in the section DISTRICT ORGANIZATION, ETC. which is included in the support materials which follow this report.

If a provincial plan for the development of school library services at the district level were deemed feasible, more detailed follow-up work could be done, including outlines for suggested organization in the remaining areas of the province.

Because the Task Force on School Libraries is convinced that a province-wide plan for the development of school library service at the district level is the logical course to pursue in the immediate future, it is recommended

1) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education initiate a 3-5 year plan for the development of school library service at the district level throughout the province.

2) That larger school boards, and/or smaller boards acting in concert, be encouraged to employ qualified library supervisors.

3) That, to assist school boards to hire such qualified personnel, the Department of Education consider providing some initial financial assistance.

SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES: CONSOLIDATION OR COOPERATION?

> "There seems to me to be little justification in many areas of the province for providing and expanding two library systems for the services of one reading public."
>
> - Alderman Brenda Shannon, Ward 2, Halifax, in a letter to Lewis Smith, member of the Minister's Task Force on School Libraries.

> "Past experience shows that combining facilities does not save money or improve standards of service. Consolidated libraries are inhibiting the development of both school and public library service in Alberta."
>
> - Alberta. Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Library Development. Statement on Community School Libraries. Edmonton, 1979.

There is no clear agreement on the benefits or disadvantages of cooperation between public and school libraries.

Demands for such cooperation are constantly being made by politicians, parents and educators; yet where combined libraries have been established, the results often have been disappointing.

Some of the disagreement appears to stem from confusion as to the types of cooperation possible. Such cooperation may range all the way from a completely coordinated facility, serving both the public and school population, to a simple case of public libraries lending materials to students and teachers.

In order to understand what is meant by cooperation between school and public libraries, we have identified some of the possible types of cooperation as follows:

1) JOINT FACILITY, where both a public and school library are housed within the same facility
2) SHARED FACILITIES, where school and public libraries share workshop, processing and storage facilities, but operate independent libraries
3) SHARED RESOURCES, where both types of libraries make their resources available to each other's population through interlibrary loan services

4) CATALOGUE SHARING, where computer print-outs of regional public library holdings are located in school libraries

5) BIBLIOGRAPHIC SERVICES, where public libraries prepare bibliographies in specific subject areas for teachers and students

6) JOINT IN-SERVICE TRAINING, where public and school libraries cooperate to train personnel working in their libraries

7) CONSULTING SERVICES, where regional libraries provide such services for schools without trained library personnel

8) SHARED PERSONNEL, such as a District Supervisor of School Libraries who is also responsible for Children's and Young People's Services for the Regional Library, and whose salary is shared by the School Board and the Regional Library Board

9) SHARED SERVICES, involving the joint ordering, processing and cataloguing of materials for both school and public libraries

10) CLIENT SERVICES, where public libraries assume, for a fee, the task of ordering, processing and cataloguing materials for school libraries

In order to further clarify the types of cooperation, we refer to a distinction proposed by Pearce J. Penney, Chief Provincial Librarian for Newfoundland and Labrador. Penney suggests that we look at cooperation between school and public libraries as one thing, and consolidation -- where there is a single joint facility -- as another. He favours cooperation over consolidation, noting that joint services have not been a success and are not particularly desirable. Cooperation, however, is seen to be an essential ingredient for good library service. (See L.J. Amey, ed. THE CANADIAN SCHOOL-HOUSED PUBLIC LIBRARY, Halifax: Dalnousie University Libraries and Dalhousie School of Library Service, 1979)

There are several examples of joint school/public libraries in Canada. The province of Alberta has seventy-four such facilities; Newfoundland has eleven. Nova Scotia has one -- the Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre, in Port Hawkesbury.

In Alberta, a study of the effectiveness of the seventy-four combined libraries found that only nine were giving acceptable public library

service. Problems were noted with the different roles of each library: the school library supports the curriculum and is geared to a specific group with specific needs; the public library is a local information centre promoting its resources to all age groups.

The study said that money was not saved by combining facilities, nor were standards improved. Therefore, the study concluded, "further development of this kind of facility is not recommended. It is time for the school and public libraries to go their separate ways." (Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Library Development, STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY SCHOOL LIBRARIES, Edmonton, 1979)

The Minister's Task Force on School Libraries received a number of submissions which took the opposite view. Halifax Alderman Brenda Shannon, in her letter to the Task Force, posed this question: "Would not better service and value for our library dollars be received if integration of these services and staffs were to be initiated, especially where new or expanded school facilities are going to be built, so that a community library is in the school building?"

Alderman Shannon noted some current objections to shared facilities. One was that adults would not go to schools, yet, she pointed out, large numbers participate in community schools and in continuing education and recreation programs. She also suggested that the importance of the different roles of the two libraries was minor, and that public libraries would complement school curricula.

Alderman Shannon described the political pressures working for combined facilities. She wrote that Halifax City Council had directed both its library board and school board to look at total library service, and had requested that they come forward with recommendations for the inclusion of combined library facilities in one or two of the new schools planned for the Spryfield area.

During the months that the Task Force on School Libraries has been preparing this report, the joint committee of the Halifax Board of School Commissioners and the Halifax City Regional Library Board has studied the possibility of at least one combined school/public library

branch to be located in the Spryfield area. The recommendation of this committee was that such a branch should not be built. At a recent meeting of the Halifax City Council, this recommendation was brought to a vote, with the majority voting against such a combined branch library. Plans are now underway to open a separate branch of the Halifax City Regional Library in the Spryfield area in September, 1981.

The impetus, in most cases, for combined school/public libraries has seemed to be primarily financial, with the quality of service a secondary consideration. Therefore, attention must be paid to those areas where combined facilities exist to determine whether or not monies have been saved, and whether or not the level of service is satisfactory.

It has been noted that in Alberta money was not saved by combining facilities, and that poor service was the rule. Similar conclusions were reached in Newfoundland. An up-to-date evaluation of the experiment at the Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre might seem to be in order at this time to see whether similar results are indicated.

In other areas of the province, varying levels of cooperation exist between school and public libraries, school and university libraries, etc.

For example, the Antigonish Regional High School Library maintains a close liaison with the library at Saint Francis Xavier University. Senior students, especially, are able to make use of the reference facilities and materials in the university library and interlibrary loan of materials is carried on regularly.

As yet, the South Shore Regional Library has little real interaction with schools along the South Shore. The minimal cooperation that exists involves informal contacts with some school librarians and the lending of books to teachers for classroom use. It is worth noting, however, that this Regional Library is not unreceptive to the idea of closer cooperation in the future. Chief Librarian Gloria Hardy would like to see copies of the SSRL catalogue in all local school libraries, would like to visit schools to inform them of the services offered by the SSRL, and is prepared to compile bibliographies in specific subject areas for teachers, if they request such service.

Beverly True, Chief Librarian, Cumberland Regional Library, comments, "The services and material provided by the school and public libraries are not duplications, that favorite word used by those who know so little about libraries and their functions. The public and school libraries complement each other -- the public library may even supplement the curriculum -- but they do not serve the same purposes."

The Task Force on School Libraries has given some thought to cooperation between school and public libraries, particularly, as one method of bringing better school library service to the rural areas of this province. For many schools, good library service will come about only when there is some measure of cooperation.

It is assumed that financial constraints will prohibit the hiring of fully-qualified library personnel for all schools in the province. Financial constraints will also inhibit the development of first-class collections of learning resources in many schools.

Therefore, it would seem advisable that cooperation between school and public libraries become a stated objective on the part of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and ways and means, both formal and informal, be planned to achieve this objective.

For example, computerized catalogues of regional library holdings could be developed and placed in all school libraries within a particular regional library district.

As an example of a plan to share personnel and services at a district level, the proposed Western Counties Public/School Library Pilot Project suggests some interesting possibilities.

A very successful sharing of supervisory personnel at the district level was observed by the Chairman of the Task Force on School Libraries on a recent study tour in the United Kingdom. There the boards of large county library systems, in cooperation with the school boards in their regions, share the salary of the Supervisor of School Libraries, who also acts as Coordinator of Children's and Young People's Services within the county library system. Physical facilities, support staff, a supplementary collection to assist school projects, a professional collection on library and education topics, a display collection of new materials, and a delivery service for materials are also provided at the headquarters of the county library for this service to schools.

Eventually, regional or district resource centres should be developed which could not only supplement the school and public library collections by housing and making accessible special materials too expensive for any one library to purchase, but could also centralize the ordering, cataloguing, processing and delivery of most library materials acquired by all the libraries within a particular region.

Because the Task Force on School Libraries is convinced that closer cooperation throughout the province between school libraries and other libraries, particularly regional public libraries, is essential for the development of good library service, especially in the rural areas, it is recommended

1) That cooperation between school and public libraries become a stated objective of the Nova Scotia Department of Education,

   That the Department of Education actively promote both formal and informal cooperation between school libraries and other types of libraries and related institutions, and

   That ways and means be planned by the Department of Education to carry out these recommendations.

2) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education conduct an evaluation of the school/public library services provided by the Strait Area Education and Recreation Centre, with a view to comparing the findings to evaluations of similar combined school/public libraries in other areas of Canada.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY AND SPECIAL GROUPS

> "... The position of [women] in Nova Scotia cannot be improved by legislation only, but by attitudinal change, which can come about through enlightenment and understanding. Therefore, the availability of suitable ... material ... can be a positive asset in attempting attitudinal change if it is placed in a readily accessible position with a knowledgeable librarian to encourage its use."
>
> - Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, February, 1980.

There has been, in recent years, an increasing awareness of, emphasis on, and interest in special groups within society. Many individuals and groups have been actively discriminated against or, perhaps worse, treated as "non-beings" with their needs and rights totally ignored.

As it has been pointed out in the above quotation, legislation alone is not the answer; attitudes must change. Although it may not be impossible to "teach old dogs new tricks", how much easier and more efficient it is to teach "young dogs" properly from the beginning.

The task would seem to be two-fold:

1) To help those who belong to a special group to understand and cope with their "differences", whether these are based upon ethnic, linguistic, religious, or sexual criteria, or are related to mental or physical disabilities.

2) To help those outside such groups to understand these "differences", and to appreciate that "different" does not equate with "bad".

Apart from the home, the school is the logical place for the teaching and learning which will result in changing attitudes toward "differences". However, no teacher, textbook, or school program alone can effect such changes.

> "... most students at one time or another make use of the library. A school library should contain books, displays and material that will assist <u>all</u> students in functioning effectively as caring, sharing individuals..."
>
> - Ethnic Services, Nova Scotia Department of Education, February, 1980.

Teachers and students must have ready access to a wide range of materials which will provide facts, opinions and points-of-view, so that critical thinking and intelligent judgements will result.

Organizations involved with various ethnic groups, women's rights, exceptional children, etc. are bombarded with requests from teachers and students for relevant information. These organizations are, and will continue to be, important resources for learning within the community.

However, each school and/or school district should maintain basic collections of resource materials related to these special group

Apart from the development of these special subject collections, thought must be given to the provision of learning materials suited to the physical and mental capabilities of the students being served. Students with learning disabilities must have access to materials which satisfy their needs, without frustrating and discouraging them, while the more gifted should find resources which challenge their particular abilities. School library collections may contain, therefore, not only the more obvious print and audio-visual items, but may need to include large-print books, books on tape or cassette, special furniture and equipment for listening and viewing, computer terminals, etc.

The physical aspects of the school library must be considered in relation to some of these special groups.

If it is not possible to locate the library on the ground floor of the school, with easy access by a door or ramp, an elevator may have to be considered.

The library quarters themselves must be spacious enough for freedom of movement by those using wheelchairs or other physical aids.

Proper lighting is important for all library users, but for visually handicapped students this becomes even more important.

In considering the school library and its responsibility to special groups within the school, within the community, and within society in general, the Task Force on School Libraries would like to emphasize the following points:

1) The school library should be physically designed and equipped to accommodate users with handicaps of various types.

2) The school library should acquire and maintain a collection of materials relevant to the study and understanding of the various special groups mentioned, and in building its over-all collection, take into account the differing physical and mental capabilities of its users.

3) The school library should establish and maintain contact with organizations which might assist in selecting and obtaining such special materials.

4) The school library should be staffed by personnel who are willing and able to encourage the use of such materials, and to assist students and teachers in using them.

With the foregoing in mind, and on the assumption that most schools in Nova Scotia include one or more of these particular groups and/or levels of student ability which require special learning resources to support them, it is recommended

1) That funding for school library materials be adequate to cover the acquisition of learning materials related to special groups (ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual, mentally handicapped, etc.) and to the varied learning capabilities of all students.

2) That the Nova Scotia Department of Education consider the provision of special funds to school districts wishing to develop library collections, at the district level, of these specialized materials.

3) That the School Planning Division of the Department of Education insure that all new school library facilities are planned with the needs of the handicapped student and teacher in mind, and

That the School Planning Division study existing school library facilities with a view to recommending renovations necessary to make these libraries more accessible to handicapped users.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have generally considered, when discussing school libraries, two types of budgets: 1) capital, 2) annual, or operational.

The CAPITAL budget is meant to set up library quarters, furnish and equip them, and provide a beginning collection of materials. A distinction usually has been made between funds for furniture, audio-visual equipment, etc. and funds for learning materials, such as books, magazines, audio-visual software, and the like.

The ANNUAL or OPERATIONAL budget has usually provided funds for learning materials alone.

One difficulty to be faced is the significant difference between school library budgets as they exist at present in Nova Scotia, and the funding which is recommended by the basic guide, the 1967 Standards of Library Service for Canadian Schools.

For example, for an annual budget, this document recommends:

For books and other print media	$5 - 8	per pupil
For audio-visual materials	$2 - 4	per pupil
Total:	$7 - 12	per pupil

Taking into consideration the inflation rate, which has more than doubled costs since 1967, perhaps we should consider $14 to $24 per pupil to be more realistic.

While many school boards throughout the province have been budgeting for their libraries in excess of the cost-shared grants provided under the Foundation Program, many more have been lagging far behind in their provision of adequate library service, and still others have not yet got their library programs off the ground.

In the expectation that the Commission on Public Education Finance will keep the need for improved school library services in mind, and will include recommendations in its report for more adequate funding for such services, the Task Force on School Libraries has decided to keep its comments on school library budgeting quite brief, and to concentrate on presenting the following recommendations:

1) That adequate funds be made available, perhaps over a 3 - 5 year period, so that schools which have not received capital grants for library materials might establish and/or upgrade their library collections.

2) That the per pupil annual grant for the purchase of library materials be increased to a realistic amount.

3) That an adequate minimum annual grant for library materials be set so that schools with lower populations will not be penalized, and will be able to develop collections and services to fill the needs of their students and teachers.

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